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THE
LIFE AND TIMES

OF

HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX,

SPEAKER OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AND

Republican Candidate for the Vice-Presidency.

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Stephen Colfax

HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX.

The subject of this sketch, who is on the Republican ticket for Vice-President, like most of our illustrious characters, is wholly a self-made man. Without wealthy parentage, backed by no influential friends, without education, except such as, a mere lad, he was able to pick up in our elementary schools, he has, by his own unaided energy and intellectual force, risen to the first rank of American statesmen. Like his illustrious associate on the same ticket, General Grant, he has no one to thank for the proud position to which he has attained.

In this respect both are peculiarly representative men—the legitimate product and illustration of our republican institutions. It is often urged against the nomination of certain persons for the highest offices in the gift of the nation, that they are not thoroughly educated, and that they are without the accomplishments necessary in one occupying the chief positions of this great republic. The polished gentleman, the ripe scholar, and thoroughly read statesman, are very desirable; but the man of the people, coming up from the people, more thoroughly understands their wants and feelings, and secures their sympathy more fully than one bred in the schools and brought up amid associations of what would be called a more aristocratic life.

But though Colfax was a poor boy, and possessed none of the advantages of the wealthy and influential,

he still comes from a stock of which he may well be proud. His grandfather, General Colfax, was the commander of Washington's Life Guards, and though it was a more honorary than responsible position, so far as military movements were concerned, yet it was in itself a guarantee of high rank in society, undoubted integrity, and ability. An incident is related of General Colfax and Lafayette which is worthy of remembrance. When Lafayette last visited this country, he was received at Newark, New Jersey, by a body of troops under command of General Colfax. "Do you remember me?" inquired Colfax, as he grasped the hand of the Marquis. Lafayette did not reply in words; but, throwing his arms around the General's neck, testified by an embrace and a kiss his recognition of his old and valued friend. Gen. Colfax's standing in society was further shown by the family into which he married. No name ranked higher among the illustrious men of the colony of New York than Philip Schuyler, a cousin of whom, Hester Schuyler, became his wife. It was thus the present Speaker came by his distinguished name, Schuyler. It might also be added, as another evidence of the distinction in which he was held, he became the warm personal friend of Washington. He seemed, however, not to have amassed wealth for his son, Schuyler Colfax, for he held the position of subordinate officer in one of the New York city banks, with nothing but his salary to depend on. He lived in North Moore street, where he died four months before the subject of the present sketch was born. The date of his birth is March 23, 1823. The young widow was left with the infant boy, her only son, with very scanty means for their support. It was therefore of the highest importance that he should be

early put to some remunerative employment. The consequence was, that he was kept at school only till he was ten years of age, when his education was completed, and he was launched into the world to support himself and help his mother. Placed in a subordinate position in a mercantile establishment, he remained there for three years, and bid fair to become in time one of the merchants of the city. But his mother in the meantime having married a second husband, a Mr. Matthews, he proposed to emigrate West. The mother, not wishing to leave her only boy behind, took him from the store, and they all removed to St. Joseph's county, Indiana, settling down in the little village of New Carlisle. Here young Schuyler was able to obtain a clerkship in a country store, where he remained four years. That he was a boy of uncommon capacity is evident from the fact that at seventeen years of age he was appointed Deputy County Auditor. Occupying this official position, it became necessary for him to remove to the county town, South Bend. Here, when not occupied with the duties of his office, he devoted himself to studying the laws of the State. In the growing West, where talent and energy are sure to win their way, it was easy to see that young Colfax would make his mark. A mere youth of seventeen, who of his own accord would devote his leisure hours to the dry study of the law, evidently had in him more than is found in the common run of boys. He did not do it with the expectation of becoming a lawyer by profession, but from the feeling that he would need it in the part he meant eventually to take in the affairs of the State. Not content with a general knowledge, he read so thoroughly the statutes of the State that he became one of its ablest expounders. He thus, without any definite plan before

him, unconsciously prepared himself for the field of his future labors. His appointment as Deputy State Auditor, and the duties connected with that office, naturally turned his mind into politics, and he, as he approached maturity, when he would become a voter, and of course eligible to any office, took a deep interest in political questions.

A writer says of him: "Like almost every Western citizen of any activity of body and mind, young Colfax took practical hold of political matters about as soon as he could vote. He talked and thought, and began to print his views from time to time in the local newspaper of the place. His peculiar faculty of dealing fairly and at the same time pleasantly with men of all sorts, his natural sobriety and sensibleness of opinion, and his power of stating things plainly and correctly, made him what may be called a natural newspaper man. He was employed during several sessions to report the proceedings of the State Senate for the Indianapolis Journal, and in this position made many friends, and gained a good reputation for political information and ability as a writer."

In 1845, a year after he became a voter, he, with that readiness, energy, and forecast which had distinguished him as a boy, determined to take at once a more prominent part in the political affairs of the State than he had hitherto done, and although not a printer, and totally ignorant of the details of the trade, a knowledge of which was considered indispensable to a country editor, boldly started a weekly journal at South Bend, called the *St. Joseph Valley Register* — becoming its sole proprietor and editor. That he had no means to justify him in this expensive and doubtful undertaking is very evident from

the sketch we have given of his career until the present time.

But if additional proof was wanting, it would be found in the fact that he was only twenty-two years of age, and started with but two hundred and fifty subscribers, and knew nothing practically about printing. In some sketches of him it has been stated that he was a printer, but this is not so. The error arose from the fact that an editor and proprietor of a country paper always feels it necessary to be a practical printer. But that self-reliance which invariably accompanies self-culture and training made him confident that he could soon master the difficulties of his new profession, and he was not disappointed.

His limited means rendered it necessary for him to economize closely, and he, therefore, at first had to aid in setting up the matter for the paper, but with its increasing prosperity he found that editorial labors demanded all his time. But during the first year it was up hill work—heavy outgoes, and but little returns. Bills had to be staved off with fair promises, and often the month closed up darkly for the young editor; but he struggled on with that confidence in ultimate success which has always characterized him. Although at the end of the first year his accounts showed the heavy balance of \$1,375 against him, he was not discouraged, for he saw his paper established on a firm basis, and beyond peril of shipwreck. It steadily increased in popularity, and though in a few years his office was burned down, and, being covered by no insurance, proved a total loss, he courageously commenced business again, and was soon once more on the road to prosperity. It gave him a comfortable living, and he continued to be editor and

proprietor until a few years ago—even during his first two terms in Congress writing a weekly editorial for it. The paper vigorously upheld the reforms of the day, and its articles, though characterized by great vigor, were wholly free from the slang and personal abuse which are so apt to disfigure the provincial press. As editor he showed the same urbanity, courtesy, and dignity which distinguished him as Speaker of the House of Congress.

While quietly pursuing his editorial career, he was in another way laying the foundation of his reputation as a public speaker. A debating club was formed in the village, of which he became a member. It met once a week during the winter season, and it is said Colfax was seldom absent from a meeting. All the public topics of the day were here discussed, and it was soon discovered that Colfax was designed by nature for a public debater. Hon. John D. Defrees, now Superintendent of Government Printing, also belonged to this club, and here the two formed that attachment which distinguishes them to this day.

In politics Colfax was a Whig, and remained one as long as the party existed, and then went with the main body of it into the Republican party.

In 1848 he was sent as a delegate to the Convention that nominated General Taylor for President, and was made secretary of that body. In 1850 he represented St. Joseph's County in the Convention which framed the present constitution of Indiana, and was one of its ablest and most active members. He took strong ground against the iniquitous clause which forbade free colored men from settling in the State. The next year he was nominated by his party for Congress, but in the canvass

his vehement opposition to this measure was used so successfully against him that he was beaten, but only by the small majority of two hundred votes.

In 1852 he was again elected to the Whig National Convention, and took an active part in the canvass that followed, both with his pen and tongue. In 1854 he was again nominated for Congress, and this time elected. He here soon gave evidence of his skill and power as a debater, and at once made his mark. His familiarity with State and national politics made him a dangerous enemy to encounter, and no adversary ever grappled with him without carrying away with him marks of the severity of the conflict.

His course was so satisfactory to his friends that in 1856 they again elected him to Congress. During this Congress occurred the great struggle over what was known as the Lecompton swindle. It aroused the deepest feeling on both sides, and shook the nation to its centre. Colfax threw himself into it as though he had at last found a crisis great and fearful enough to call forth all his latent energy. The great truths he uttered pealed like a trumpet through the land, and "went forth," says one who listened to him, "to repel the tide of terror which was sweeping over struggling Kansas, and clearly showed that even then he was one of the best debaters in the House. Those 'bogus,' odious laws were denounced in glowing eloquence. When he came to speak of that one which made the penalty for even saying 'that persons had no right to hold slaves in the Territory,' imprisonment at hard labor, with ball and chain, he raised one of the regulation balls from his desk and shook it in the face of Congress, and said, in tones that those who heard him never forgot, that, un-

der this infamous law, such a degradation would have been inflicted upon Washington and Jefferson, Webster and Clay.”

He closed this speech in the following telling language:

“As I look, sir, to the smiling valleys and fertile plains of Kansas, and witness there the sorrowful scenes of civil war, in which, when forbearance at last ceased to be a virtue, the Free State men of the Territory felt it necessary, deserted as they were by their Government, to defend their lives, their families, their property, and their hearthstones, the language of one of the noblest statesmen of the age, uttered six years ago at the other end of this Capitol, rises before my mind. I allude to the great statesman of Kentucky, Henry Clay. And while the party which, while he lived, lit the torch of slander at every avenue of his private life, and libelled him before the American people by every epithet that renders man infamous, as a gambler, debauchee, traitor, and enemy of his country, are now engaged in shedding fictitious tears over his grave, and appealing to his old supporters to aid by their votes in shielding them from the indignation of an uprisen people, I ask them to read this language of his, which comes to us as from his tomb to-day. With the change of but a single geographical word in the place of ‘Mexico,’ how prophetically does it apply to the very scenes and issues of this year! And who can doubt with what party he would stand in the coming campaign, if he were restored to us from the damps of the grave, when they read the following, which fell from his lips in 1850, and with which, thanking the House for its attention, I conclude my remarks:

“ ‘But if, unhappily, we should be involved in war, in

civil war, between the two parties of this Confederacy, in which the effort upon the one side should be to restrain the introduction of slavery into the new Territories, and upon the other side to force its introduction there, what a spectacle should we present to the astonishment of mankind, in an effort not to propagate rights, but—I must say it, though I trust it will be understood to be said with no design to excite feeling—a war to propagate wrongs in the Territories thus acquired from Mexico! It would be a war in which we should have no sympathies, no good wishes—in which all mankind would be against us; for, from the commencement of the Revolution down to the present time, we have constantly reproached our British ancestors for the introduction of slavery into this country.’ ”

Over half a million copies of this speech were printed and sent broadcast over the land—a compliment never before paid to a member of Congress.

So steadily had he risen in popularity, that before his term of service expired, he was re-nominated by acclamation. But now occurred the great breaking up of the Whig party, and Fremont became the candidate of the new Republican party. But before his nomination, and just after that of Fillmore—his old friend—by the “American” or Know Nothing party, he showed that he was heart and soul with the principles of the Republican party, and said in a letter, “Whether the Republican ticket shall be successful or defeated this year, the duty to support it, to proclaim and defend its principles, to arm the conscience of the nation, is none the less incumbent. The Republican movement is based on Justice and Right, consecrated to Freedom, commended by the teachings of our Revolutionary Fathers, and de-

manded by the extraordinary events of our recent history, and though its triumphs may be delayed, nothing is more certain.

In the Thirty-seventh Congress he was made Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, and did much to increase and extend the mail facilities of the West, and aided also in securing the successful operation of the overland mail and telegraph to San Francisco. As a natural consequence, he became from the outset a warm friend of the Pacific Railroad, and has continued so ever since.

He was first chosen Speaker of the Thirty-eighth Congress by a vote of 101 to 81, and in each Congress since he has been placed in some responsible position, which he has ever filled with signal ability. Every session of Congress has been marked by great bitterness of feeling, and yet so just has been his ruling, so courteous and kind his manner to foes as well as friends, that he has been popular with both parties. Probably not one man in a thousand could have passed through the trying scenes which he has, with the same equanimity and approbation of both friends and foes.

He was deeply interested in the campaign of 1860, and previous to the nomination of Mr. Lincoln he thus gave his views of the course the party should adopt. He says: "We differ somewhat from those ardent contemporaries who demand the nomination of their favorite representative man, whether popular or unpopular, and who insist that this must be done, even if we are defeated. We do agree with them in declaring that we shall go for no man who does not prefer free labor and its extension, to slave labor and its extension,—who, though mindful of the impartiality which should characterize

the Executive of the whole Union, will not fail to rebuke all new plots for making the Government the propagandist of slavery, and compel promptly and efficiently the suppression of that horrible slave-trade which the whole civilized world has banned as infamous, piratical, and accursed. But in a Republican National Convention, if any man could be found, North, South, East or West, whose integrity, whose life, and whose avowals rendered him unquestionably safe on these questions, and yet who could yet poll one, two or three hundred thousand votes more than any one else, we believe it would be both wisdom and duty, patriotism and policy, to nominate him by acclamation and thus render the contest an assured success from its very opening. We hope to see 1866 realize the famed motto of Augustine—"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

The eventual nomination of Mr. Lincoln met his hearty approval, and he entered on the campaign with ardor and energy, and did good service in the State of Indiana. Its successful termination he considered as the beginning of a new era in American politics. The question of the extension of slavery, which had occupied so much of his time and labor, he believed now to be settled forever. The alarming attitude of the South caused him some uneasiness, but, like the great majority of the people, he did not think the leading secessionists could force the Southern people into civil war. After the inauguration, the President was urged on all sides by the Presidential electors, Governors, and politicians innumerable, to make Mr. Colfax Postmaster-General. Nothing would have given Mr. Lincoln more pleasure than to have conferred this appointment upon him, not

only for the sake of the influential friends who urged it, but out of personal regard to Mr. Colfax. He knew he could not have a more capable, upright, and firmer friend in his cabinet, but as he had resolved to give the Secretaryship of the Interior to Hon. C. B. Smith of Indiana, he was compelled reluctantly to decline, for it would not do to take two of his cabinet from the same State.

Whether Mr. Colfax desired this appointment as earnestly as his friends did for him, we do not know. He, however, showed no disappointment, and continued, through the perilous struggle that soon commenced, the President's devoted friend, and he counselled with him in any important step he proposed to take, as much perhaps as he did with any of the members of his cabinet. During the years of war that followed, his courage never failed nor did his confidence in the final result waver.

The withdrawal of the Southern members of Congress awakened in him scorn and indignation rather than fear, and he looked calmly and without flinching into the frightful abyss that had opened under the Government. As Speaker, he controlled the strong elements around him with a calm dignity, and gave all the aid in his power to support the war. With great powers of physical endurance, he was able to sustain the terrible strain put upon him in the protracted sessions, while his exhaustless, imperturbable temper and almost unexampled knowledge of parliamentary law, and his quickness of decision, secured him the highest respect from both sides of the House.

A writer in "Putnam's Magazine" has truly said Mr. Colfax "has no eccentricities, but great tact. His talents are administrative and executive, rather than

deliberative. He would make good appointments, and adopt sure policies. He would make a better President, or Speaker of the House, than Senator. He knows men well, estimates them correctly, treats them all fairly and candidly. No man will get through his business with you in fewer minutes, and yet none is more free from the horrid *brusqueness* of busy men. There are heart and kindness in Mr. Colfax's politeness. Men leave his presence with the impression that he is at once an able, honest, and kind man. Political opponents like him personally, as well as his political friends. We have never heard that he has any enemies. The breath of slander has been silent toward his fair, spotless fame. The wife of his youth, after being for a long time an invalid, sank to her final rest several years ago, leaving him childless. His mother and sister preside at his receptions, which for many years have been, not the most brilliant, but the most popular of any given at the Capital. Socially, Mr. Colfax is frank, lively, jolly. It may be that he feels his oats in some degree, but dignity hasn't spoiled him. The everlasting I-hood and Us-ness of great men is forgotten in his presence. His manners are not quite so familiar as those of Lincoln, but nearly so. They are gentle, natural, graceful, with a business-like quickness of thought and motion. But they are very far from the high and mighty style of Sumner, or the judicial coldness of Fessenden, Sherman, and Trumbull. Though manly, they are genial and winning. American mothers believe in Schuyler Colfax. There are more babies named after him than for any public man since Clay."

When the war was terminated Mr. Colfax determined to take a trip across the continent, not only to obtain

the relaxation he needed, but to see for himself that great Western world in the welfare of which he had taken such a deep interest. His preparations all having been made, he called on the President to bid him good-bye, when the latter said: "Mr. Colfax, I want you to take a message from me to the miners whom you visit; I have a very large idea of the mineral wealth of our nation." He then went on to repeat his message, which Mr. Colfax afterwards faithfully delivered to the miners in their rough homes. He called again on the very evening of the assassination, only half an hour before Mr. Lincoln started for the theatre, and was invited by the latter to accompany him, but he declined on account of pressing engagements, as he expected to leave Washington the next morning. The President was in high spirits, and bidding him farewell, accompanied him to the door of the Executive Mansion, and shaking his hand for the last time, said: "Don't forget, Colfax, my speech to the miners—a pleasant journey to you; I will telegraph you at San Francisco; good-bye." Colfax turned away, little dreaming that it was the last time he should hear the sound of that pleasant voice. Scarce an hour afterwards he was thunderstruck with the news that his friend had been assassinated; of course this deferred for a time his departure.

Almost his last act before striking off on the Western prairies was to deliver an eulogy on the President at Chicago, which was a noble tribute to the great martyr, and added still more to his own reputation as an orator. Reaching Atchison, at that time the farthest point of the railroad system east of the Alleghanies, he prepared for his overland trip of two thousand miles to the nearest railroad station on the California side.

The party accompanying him consisted of Lieut.-Governor Brown, of Illinois, senior editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, Mr. Albert D. Richardson, of the *New York Tribune*, and Mr. Bowles, of the *Springfield Republican*. Mr. Otis, special agent of the overland stage line, also accompanied them.

The first two days did not furnish the most pleasant anticipations. Rumors of hostile Indians were on every side, while a terrible thunder and hail storm overtook them, which so frightened the horses that the travelers were compelled to get out of the coach and face unprotected the blinding tempest.

He reached Denver the last of May, and was met by General Evans, and other officers of the Territory, and a committee of citizens. * In the evening there was a large popular gathering of the people. At Central City he delivered Mr. Lincoln's message to the miners; and he here repeated it. It was received "with mournful interest and deep pleasure."

The following is the message :

He said, he had come in part, to bring a message from the late President, that noble man, so pure, so patriotic, so forgiving, the most lovable of all men, whose tender heart bore no ill-will, who never answered railing with railing—on the very night he was seeking to soften the fate of the fallen enemies of the country, struck down by the assassin. The crime towered in its infamy, but its purpose was not accomplished. It was intended to weaken the Nation, but it made the Nation stronger. It had placed Abraham Lincoln on the very pinnacle of

* For this and other extracts of Mr. Colfax's speeches while on this trip we are indebted to Mr. Bowles, who accompanied the expedition.

fame. He did not die because he was Abraham Lincoln, but because he represented the Nation's contest with and victory over treason. We might engrave his name on marble,—it would crumble; we might inscribe it on Mt. Blanc, where that living wall four thousand feet in height overlaid a portion of the mountain eleven thousand feet high,—that granite spire would moulder in fragments round the base of its pedestal before the name and memory of Abraham Lincoln would be forgotten.

Said Mr. Lincoln to me, when I called the day before his death, to say good-bye:—"Mr. Colfax, I want you to take a message from me to the miners whom you visit. I have (said he) very large ideas of the mineral wealth of our nation. I believe it practically inexhaustible. It abounds all over the western country, from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, and its development has scarcely commenced. During the war, when we were adding a couple of millions of dollars every day to our national debt, I did not care about encouraging the increase in the volume of our precious metals. We had the country to save first. But now that the rebellion is overthrown and we know pretty nearly the amount of our national debt, the more gold and silver we mine makes the payment of that debt so much the easier. Now (said he, speaking with much emphasis) I am going to encourage that in every possible way. We shall have hundreds of thousands of disbanded soldiers, and many have feared that their return home in such great numbers might paralyze industry by furnishing suddenly a greater supply of labor than there will be demand for. I am going to try to attract them to the hidden wealth of our mountain ranges, where there is room enough for all. Immigration, which even the war has not stopped, will

land upon our shores hundreds of thousands more per year from overcrowded Europe. I intend to point them to the gold and silver that waits for them in the West. Tell the miners from me, that I shall promote their interests to the utmost of my ability; because their prosperity is the prosperity of the Nation, and (said he, his eye kindling with enthusiasm) we shall prove in a very few years that we are indeed the *treasury of the world*."

Mr. Colfax now spent nearly a week visiting the mines in the Rocky Mountains, riding up and down their rough sides—through their narrow valleys and over their occasional plains; fording their turbulent streams; gazing with never ceasing delight upon their various forms of beauty under cloud and storm and sunshine, their snow-capped peaks, their deep ravines and narrow gorges, their purpling shadowed sides and tops, their high pinnacles of rocks, monuments of creation and history; and then descending into the golden mines, following tortuous veins of precious rock, hundreds of feet beneath the surface, tracing the specks of gold among the comparative dross of iron, and copper and lead, hobnobbing with the dusty miners in their dreary workshops faintly illuminated with occasional candles, and then, ascending to day and light again, watching the processes for extracting the wealth from the ore—the irresistible grinding of the stamps, the washing with much water, the securing with copper and mercury, the after delaying with blankets—all the rarest wonders and beauties, all the divinest patience and labor and the faith of knowledge, all the mysteries of science and the intricacies of art, were "spread before" them. Mr. Colfax was well known to these hardy miners by reputation, and wherever he went they cast aside the implements

of labor, and losing for the moment even the lust of gold, gathered around him demanding a speech. Speaking being to him as natural, as one of his fellow-travellers said, as "for a duck to swim," he invariably gratified them, and delivered half a dozen speeches in as many days, always felicitous, well-timed, and highly appreciated by these rough delvers in the earth, to whom the visit of so distinguished a personage as the Speaker of Congress was a rare thing under the sun. He spoke encouraging words to them, praised their efforts and predicted great results from it. His presence and words were, for the time being, more precious to them than gold, and, as the only appreciation of his services and kindness they could render, they got up a splendid supper in his honor when he was ready to depart. The tickets to this were twelve dollars a piece, and were soon in earnest demand at fifteen dollars. Though the feast was got up in this remote section of the country, where one would expect only the rudest resemblance to a civilized entertainment, it was in reality a brilliant one in every respect, not wanting even in the attendance of accomplished, beautiful women. Colfax appreciated the compliment, and, unbending from his more formal character as a high official, joined heartily in the merriment and good feeling of the occasion.

From this place to Salt Lake City it is six hundred miles, which should have been accomplished in five days, but the Indians had made an inroad on the line, driving off the horses provided for transportation, so that it took seven days to reach the great capital of the kingdom of the many-wived Brigham Young. But for an escort of ten cavalrymen, it is doubtful whether Colfax would ever have been candidate for Vice-President.

Past the slow emigrant wagons—the wigwams of the half-breeds—through the wide tracts of sage bushes—over sterile sandy plains—through “sluices and gulches,” he at length reached the first of the Pacific slopes, and, entering the limits of Utah with his companions, passed on to Salt Lake City. The news of his coming had preceded him, and there was great rivalry between Mormons and Gentiles which should do him the most honor. First, from “Camp Douglas,” where the United States troops within easy cannon range of the city held guard over it, there came a military escort with a band of music—then a little farther on appeared the Mormon authorities some twenty in number, in formal array, who requested him to alight from the coach, which he did, and then in the open road listened to a long and prosy speech, to which he, under the broiling sun, had to respond. The party were then conducted into the city and treated to the luxury of natural sulphur baths located just in the city limits. Mr. Colfax attended the “Mormon tabernacle” in the afternoon and a “Gentile” meeting in the evening. The Mormons treated him with great respect and took unwearied pains to convince him of their loyalty to the general government and of the high moral and religious principles on which their system of polygamy is based. They serenaded him, and he in reply made them a speech, in which, although he complimented them on the “beauty of their homes and the thrift of their industry,” he very plainly told them what was their duty to the Government and what was expected of them.

A special piece was got up for him in their wonderful theatre, a daughter of Brigham Young taking part in the ballet.

Colfax had two long interviews with Young and the leaders of the Church, in which he fully and frankly discussed the principles and peculiar customs of the Mormons. The Mormon leader asked him plainly what the United States Government proposed to do with them now it had got rid of slavery. The latter replied that he had no authority to speak for the Government, but if he might be permitted to speak for himself, he would make the suggestion that he hoped the prophets of the Church would *have a new revelation on the subject*, which should put a stop to the practice of polygamy; that he hoped the people of the Mormon Church would see for themselves that polygamy was a hindrance and not a help, and move for its abandonment." The prophet cunningly replied, that he should readily welcome such a revelation; but stoutly defended the custom from the Old Testament. After meeting the various arguments brought forward the best way he could, Colfax finally asked Young, "how he got over the fact, that the two sexes were about equally divided, and if some men had twenty wives, how the others were to be provided for." "Oh," said the prophet, "there are always quite a proportion of men who prefer to remain single." "But," retorted Colfax, "so there are also a great many women who prefer not to marry." But Young was not to be foiled, and replied that it was not so—that there was not one woman in a million who would not marry if she got a chance. This ungallant answer he considered a settler. But he continued, "Suppose we give up polygamy, will not your Government demand more—will it not war upon the Mormon Bible, and its church organization?" "No," replied Colfax, emphatically; "it would have no right to."

Finally, the latter went to church, to hear the prophet expound more fully his views. In the evening he himself delivered a speech in the church. Colfax studied carefully the whole subject of Mormonism, both socially and politically, and the knowledge he obtained will be of great service to him in dealing with it, should he ever be placed at the head of the Government. He felt it his duty to enlighten the people on some points, and prepared an elaborate speech, which he delivered to the assembled congregation. Such plain, sound sense and true eloquence were new to them, and evidently made a strong impression on the more thoughtful men.

Among other things he said: "I have had a theory for years past, that it is the duty of men who are in public life, charged with a participation in the Government of a great country like ours, to know as much as possible of the interests, development, and resources of the country whose destiny, comparatively, has been committed to their hands. And I said to my friends, if they would accompany me, we would travel over the New World till we could look from the shores of the Pacific toward the Continent of Asia, the cradle of the human race. And, therefore, we are here, travelling night and day over your mountains and valleys, your deserts and plains, to see this region between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific, where, as I believe, the seat of Empire in this Republic ultimately is to be.

"Now, you who are pioneers far out here in the distant West, have many things that you have a right to ask of your Government. I can scarcely realize with this large assembly around me, that there is an almost boundless desert of twelve hundred miles between myself and the valley of the Mississippi. There are many

things that you have a right to demand; you have created, however, many things here for yourselves. No one could traverse your city without recognizing that you are a people of industry. It happened to be my fortune in Congress to do a little toward increasing the postal facilities in the West—not as much as I desired, but as much as I could obtain from Congress. And when it was proposed, to the astonishment of my fellow-members, that there should be a daily mail run across these pathless plains and mighty mountains, through the wilderness of the West to the Pacific, with the pathway lined with our enemies, the savages of the forest, and where the luxuries and even the necessaries of life in some parts of the route are unknown, the project was not considered possible; and then, when in my position as Chairman of the Post Office Committee, I proposed that we should vote a million of dollars a year to put that mail across the Continent, members came to me and said, ‘You will ruin yourself.’ They thought it was monstrous, an unjust and extravagant expenditure. I said to them, though I knew little of the West then compared to what I have learned in the few weeks of this trip—I said, ‘The people along the line of that route have a right to demand it at your hands, and in their behalf I demand it.’ Finally the bill was coaxed through, and you have a daily mail running through here, or it would run with almost the regularity of clockwork, were it not for the incursions of these savages. And here let me say, by way of parenthesis, that if I ever had any particular love for ‘the noble red man,’ it is pretty much evaporated during this trip. I do not think as much of him as I did. They were looking down from the hills at us, as we have

since learned ; and had it not been that Mr. Otis and I had our hair cut so short at Atchison, that it would not have paid expenses to be taken even by an Indian, they might have scalped us.

“ You had a right to this daily mail, and you have it. You had a right also, to demand, as the eastern portion of this Republic had, telegraphic communication speeding the messages of life and death, of pleasure and of traffic ; that the same way should be opened up by that frail wire, the conductor of Jove’s thunderbolts, tamed down and harnessed for the use of man. And it fell to my fortune to ask it for you ; to ask a subsidy from the Government in its aid. It was but hardly obtained ; yet, now the grand result is achieved, who regrets it—who would part with this bond of union and civilization ? There was another great interest you had a right to demand. Instead of the slow, toilsome and expensive manner in which you freight your goods and hardware to this distant territory, you should have a speedy transit between the Missouri Valley and this intramontane basin in which you live. Instead of paying two or three prices—sometimes overrunning the cost of the article—you should have a railroad communication, and California demanded this. I said, as did many others in Congress, ‘ This is a great national enterprise ; we must bind the Atlantic and Pacific States together by bands of iron ; we must send the iron horse through all these valleys and mountains of the interior, and when thus interlaced together, we shall be a more compact and homogeneous Republic.’ And the Pacific Railroad bill passed. This great work of uniting three thousand miles, from shore to shore, is to be consummated, and we hail the day of peace, because with peace we can do

many things as a nation that we cannot do in war. This railroad is to be built, this company is to build it; if they do not, the Government will. It shall be put through soon; not toilsomely, slowly, as a far distant event, but as an event of the decade in which we live. * * *

“And now, *What has the Government a right to demand of you?* It is not that which Napoleon exacts from his officers in France—which is allegiance to the Constitution and fidelity to the Emperor. Thank God, we have no Emperor nor despot in this country, throned or unthroned. Here, every man has the right, himself, to exercise his elective suffrage as he sees fit, none molesting him or making him afraid. And the duty of every American citizen is condensed in a single sentence, as I said to your committee yesterday—not in allegiance to an Emperor, but *allegiance to the Constitution, obedience to the laws, and devotion to the Union.* [Cheers.] When you live to *that* standard, you have the right to demand protection; and were you three times three thousand miles from the national capital, wherever the starry banner of the Republic waves and a man stands under it, if his rights of life, liberty and property are assailed, and he has rendered *this* allegiance to his country, it is the duty of the Government to reach out its arm, if it take a score of regiments, to protect and uphold him in his rights.” [Cheers.]

After giving much good advice to Young, in a more private manner, Mr. Colfax at length resumed his journey, his face still turned towards the Pacific coast. Determined to inspect personally every great interest in this wonderful region, to enable him in future to act upon each as it came up in the councils of the nation,

he visited Virginia City in Nevada, and made a speech to the miners, who crowded around him with the same interest that they would if he had been the President. Said he: "I know that in all these mining regions there is some distrust and alarm in regard to the taxation of the mines, and I came here this evening to this balcony that I might tell you frankly what I believe myself about this interesting subject, whether it agrees with your views or does not agree with them, for I can only speak to you what I sincerely believe. I take it for granted in the first place that everybody in this broad land has, directly or indirectly, to aid in the payment of our national debt—that debt which has been accumulated for the salvation of our country; a debt which, great as it is, is small in comparison with the value of the great interests which were saved by its incurring. For though it has cost much to save this country, it will prove in the end that it has cost less to save it than it would have cost to lose the country. The question is, how shall this burden be adjusted? For it is the duty of the statesman to adjust that burden with equity to all the interests in the land. I came from my home on this long journey, not for pleasure and relaxation alone, but for instruction; that I might see with my own eyes the improvement in the West, the interests and resources of the country on this side of the continent, its wants, and what it had a right to demand of legislation. Having been in the past—and I do not speak of it boastfully, for I believe you all know what I have done for Western interests in the past,—having been in the past a sincere and earnest friend of Western interests, I thought that a personal visit to this interesting region of the Republic, now being developed rapidly, and to be developed with tenfold rapidity

in the years which are to come, now that peace has returned to our land, might make me a more intelligent and useful friend and advocate of Western interests than ever before.

“In the first place, I believe in a fable that I read in my younger years, the moral of which was that you should never kill the goose which laid the golden egg. On the contrary, you should encourage the goose to lay more eggs of that kind. [Applause.]

“I think that is a principle you will all agree in. We are having an immense immigration from Europe. It was scarcely checked by the war, even with all the threatening of a draft hanging over the immigrant—a threat which the potentates and powers of Europe published throughout their lands, and had described with exaggerated terrors. The subjects in Europe were told that our country was racked with civil strife, was going down into anarchy and ruin; that the great institutions of American liberty were overthrown, and that we were to be consigned to constant intestine war hereafter. In spite of all these prophecies of evil, immigrants poured in upon us, even during the war, by thousands and tens of thousands. They will come by hundreds of thousands hereafter. They have to go somewhere in this broad land. When they arrive on our shores from overcrowded Europe, they should be pointed to this western realm of country, filled with the precious metals, open for all men to come and prospect and gather for themselves. I want no fetters of restriction placed upon the mining prospector who is willing to pursue his hazardous vocation. On the contrary, I would encourage him, and I would encourage others to come hither and follow his example, by extending every reasonable inducement. And I

think we have a precedent in our legislation, which justifies us in throwing open all these lands to whomsoever may choose to come here to dig for silver and for gold. If you will look at the policy of our country, which, after years of stormy contest in Congress, was finally settled in regard to our agricultural lands—a policy that will never be repealed—you will find a policy which is the truest and wisest that a great country could adopt in order to have its people tilling the soil, becoming producers of national wealth, adding to our agricultural resources, calling our people away from the crowded cities to make them tillers of the soil of the Republic. That policy is to give them an estate at a nominal price, throwing open our public lands to them, that they may become owners of the soil they till, and have a stake in the prosperity of the Nation. That is the great object sought to be obtained, and which is obtained, by the provisions of the homestead law. If that is the just policy in regard to the agricultural lands, it is equally just in regard to the mineral lands. Because the man who goes, enjoying the benefits of the homestead law, to till the soil, is assured of success. He knows, judging by all ordinary calculations, that when he turns over the greensward with his plough and puts in the seed, it will return him ten, twenty, or fifty fold. But the miner, on the contrary, knows that his vocation is a hazardous one; and if there should be a priority of benefits to either, I would hold out rather more inducements to the miner upon the mineral lands, than I would to the tiller upon the acres of agricultural lands. [Applause.] But I believe in assimilating the policy. If it is right in the one case it is right in the other, and

upon that rock of right I plant myself in that policy.
[Applause.]

“But the homestead law says that this land shall only be given to the farmer upon condition that he will occupy and improve the land himself. If he abandon the land, he loses it. If he attempts to hold it as a non-resident, he loses it. He must go on and add to the national wealth by his industry; and upon that condition he receives the land at a mere nominal fee for the patent granted to him, after five years occupancy, by the Government. That seems to be the correct policy, and that should be the policy in regard to the mineral lands. While the right of discovery and occupancy should be protected by the Government, when mineral discoveries, or what are supposed to be such, are abandoned, they should not be held to the exclusion of those who might be willing to work the abandoned claims. That is a doctrine which is based upon the principles of justice, I think.

“Now, my friends, in regard to taxation, I have precedents which will be familiar to you when I quote them. And I speak of these things because I would, as far as possible, impress on your minds those precedents, as I believe them to be right, and that your senators, and that your representatives, may place your claims and your demands in the Capitol at Washington, not upon the basis of a bonus to the miner, but upon the basis of justice as compared with other interests in the land. Let us examine the principles of the tax bill which we have framed. I know that it is a heavy and onerous tax bill. Nothing in the shape of a tax bill is calculated to be popular. Government can never get that class of bills exactly correct; and I would not

claim that this one is exactly correct, although I believe it is as nearly equal in its burdens as possible. In that tax bill you will see illustrated the policy of Congress, which has been to put the tax as far away as possible from the first production of the soil. Let us take, for instance, the article of wood. There is nothing in the tax bill levying a tax on wood growing in the forest or cut down by the forester; but when the wood is manufactured into a buggy, into a wagon, into cabinet-ware, or into any other kind of work made of wood, then the tax accrues for the first time upon it, etc.

In the ride over the Sierra, Mr. Colfax was struck with the skill and daring of the stage-drivers, and said "that it was once remarked that 'it required more talent to cross Broadway than to be justice of the peace in the country;' so I am sure much more is necessary to drive a stage down the Sierras as we were driven than to be a member of Congress."

Amid wild and beautiful scenery, now skirting with fearful rapidity the edge of a precipice, and now looking up on overhanging snow peaks, he was hurried on until the trip across the continent was at last completed, and he stood by the Golden Gate of California. Received here with the same lively demonstrations of esteem that had greeted him along his entire route, a meeting was called to hear an address from him. In his speech he said, after speaking of the course of the Government and its present condition :

"I am here among you, people of California, apparently a welcome guest. You have placed full confidence in my honesty of purpose, and I would not appear before you to speak only those words which you would applaud, when I really differed from you. I know how you feel

on the Monroe Doctrine and driving out Maximilian. I do not agree with you on these subjects; I will be frank with you. I am opposed to war for any purpose, or for any cause, except for the vindication of the national honor, or the salvation of the Union. I am for such a war, if it should occupy four, ten, or forty years; but to war in any other cause, that can be honorably avoided, I am opposed. You people of California have not seen the horrors and desolations of war around your own doors; you have not seen the hundreds and thousands of friends, neighbors and countrymen torn, mangled, dead and dying on the cold earth moistened by their blood; you have not seen the long string of ambulances carrying the mangled, groaning, suffering thousands as they have been carried to the hospitals to die, or to suffer mutilations even worse than death, that cause vigorous, industrious men to become burdens on society for life; you have not seen and could not have heard of half the horrors of war. Oh, it is a fearful thing to rush into war, except for the preservation of one's country. Such a war is as sacred as the war against the Saracens to save the sepulchre of the Saviour from the pollution of the Infidel. I am for no war with any nation, if that war can by any honorable statesmanship be avoided, even if by saying so I shall be driven into private life. I am a believer in the justice and patriotism and republicanism of the Monroe Doctrine. But I am not for war with France and England on that question now, with its renewed destruction of our commerce, its rivers of blood, and its millions of added debt. I want the Pacific Railroad built, instead of the laurels of victory on fields of carnage and of death. I want the progress and blessings of peace, instead of more

hecatombs of piled up dead, and hundreds of millions more of debt. I want the prosperity and developments of peace. I do not object to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. I admire the courage and patriotism of Juarez and his patriot bands in defence of their native land. I do not think Maximilian is the rightful ruler of Mexico. But I object to rushing into a foreign war ere we have scarcely ended our domestic one, to drive him out. I believe that diplomacy can effect the purpose better. Time may settle it for us, if we are but patient and firm.

“ You, as a people, are most deeply interested in the future progress and prosperity of our common country. Less than twenty years ago—and what a little time it appears—this great city of San Francisco was not; its site was scarcely known. But gold was discovered, and hither came adventurous pioneers with their caravans, laden, not with the spices and perfume of Asia, nor like the caravans of the Indies, with their wealth, but with their wives, children and household goods, wending their way over the sandy deserts, or scaling craggy passes through the mighty mountain ranges that separate you from your sister States on the Atlantic side of the continent. These were men of energy and of iron will; and it needs both to travel two thousand miles over such a country, and to brave the blood-thirsty savages on the way. They were men of faith, tried in the ordeal of adversity, and profited by its lessons. It was such men who founded your State, it was such men that saved it from the grasp of slavery, which its advocates had already fastened upon it. It was by their means that she entered the glorious sisterhood of States, clothed in the golden robes of Freedom. If with such a foundation,

with the example of such men before you, you are but true to yourselves, it is beyond the power of language to picture the glory of your future. Your city is destined to become the New York of the Pacific, commanding much of the trade of China, Japan, India, Australia, Mexico, South and Central America, while your store of mineral wealth, and the richness and variety of your grain and fruit, and the energy and enterprise of your people, must make your future great and glorious. Then the interest taken in the departures of your semi-monthly steamers, will be lost in the continued daily departures of many to all parts of the globe. And now, as I say to you good-night, let us all rejoice together, that, from Orient to Occident; from sea to sea; from the Atlantic seaboard—where the masts of our commerce are like the trees of the forest, across valley and river, over the vast mountains that lift their mighty forms as sentinel watch-towers of our inheritance—to the Golden Gate; from the frozen North to the sunny South, we have now, and shall have in all the coming centuries, but one Nation, one Constitution, one Flag, and one glorious Destiny!”

It required a good deal of firmness to set himself as he did against the tide of public sentiment in San Francisco in regard to the Mexican question, where it was the common talk “to clear out Maximilian in sixty days.” He knew the drift and force of the popular current, but instead of endeavoring to use it to ingratiate himself among the people, he stemmed it with all the strength his position and stirring eloquence gave him, and made a deep impression upon them. He is no demagogue, but aims always to enlighten and instruct the people. Everywhere on his route, no matter how large or small the gathering, he never refused to address

it, sometimes speaking even four or five times a day, and always on practical topics, showing a wisdom and breadth of statemanship seldom exhibited by our public speakers. "He gained credit and popularity everywhere on his journey," and while by his addresses he accomplished much good to the people, he in turn, by coming in contact with them in such varied and diverse positions, fitted himself admirably for the high position to which the nation is determined to elect him.

Mr. Colfax now took a short vacation, where neither public assemblies nor speech-making should task his energies, and with a large party visited the most noted objects of California—among other places, Yosemite Valley, whose awful desolation, unspeakable grandeur, and transcendent beauty, in turn awe, impress, and delight the beholder. Here he remained day after day, lost in wonder and admiration. He visited also the groves of gigantic cedars that have no parallel on earth, and through the prostrate trunk of one, the interior of which had been burnt out, he rode the entire length on horseback.

On his return to San Francisco the Chinese population gave him a grand dinner, in which fried shark fins, bamboo soup, banana fritters, and bird-nest soup, and sea-weed, with chop-sticks, figured prominently.

He had previously, however, run up to Oregon and Washington Territory, so as to get some personal insight into every portion of our vast possessions on the Pacific slope.

His extraordinary visit at length being completed, he prepared to return home by way of the Isthmus. Before his final departure the people of San Francisco got up a magnificent farewell banquet for him. Between

two and three hundred ladies and gentlemen sat down to it, and each vied with the other in honoring the guest of the evening. When it drew near the time for the guests to separate, Mr. Colfax rose, and amid the profoundest silence and evidences of much feeling, delivered the following beautiful farewell address:—

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—The brevity that an occasion like this commands, impels me to omit much that rises before my mind as I stand before you. But the kind and generous hospitalities of which we have been the recipients, culminating in this brilliant testimonial, which is at once a reception and a farewell, and the very cordial and complimentary address to which I have just listened, forbid that I should remain entirely silent.

“Just two months ago, after journeying over thousands of miles of mountains and valleys and deserts and plains, your honored Mayor, and a Committee of your Supervisors, met us in the cabin of the steamer “Chryso-
opolis,” and gave us an official welcome to this seven-hilled city. Since then, in all our travels upon this coast, we have been accustomed to speak of San Francisco as a home. And now, though I came here a stranger and a traveller, I feel like one who is indeed about to leave his home and hearthstone. [Applause.]

“When, on Saturday morning, I sail out through the Golden Gate upon the broad ocean, and see headland and cliff recede from view, I shall feel, as now, the inward struggle between the joy with which I think of the home and the many friends of many years, and the regret with which I leave the home I hope I have in the hearts of new friends here.

“Our party came hither to learn, by actual observa-

tion, more of this Pacific portion of the Republic, its resources and its wants; and you can testify that the grass has not grown under our feet. We have seen your varieties of mining — placer, hydraulic and quartz. We have seen many of your rich agricultural valleys, —the Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Jose, Petaluma, Russian River, Napa, Sonoma, Alameda, and others. We have travelled on nearly every mile of your two hundred to three hundred miles of railroads, closing with the delightful excursion to-day on the Alameda Railroad, for which we were indebted to its president, Mr. Cohen. We have visited, or passed through, over half of your cities and towns. We have enjoyed visits to your great national curiosities, the world-renowned Yosemite Valley, to be visited by thousands hereafter, instead of scores, if California, by wise legislation, appreciates the gift of it from the general government,—the Big Trees, the Geysers, and your neighbors, the Sea Lions.

“ We have examined, with interest, many of your manufactures, and reared as I was, in the school of Henry Clay, to believe in American manufactures, I am prouder of the suit in which I am clothed to-night, of California cloth, from wool on the back of California sheep, woven by the Mission Woollen Mills, and made here, than of the finest suit of French broadcloth I ever owned. [Applause.] I would urge you, in these last words, to foster manufactures, which are the backbone of national or State prosperity and independence. Even if they should not be profitable as a pecuniary investment, every triumph of mechanical or manufacturing industry here, is another spoke in the wheel of your progress. Develop and foster commerce on your

great Pacific sea; for Raleigh spoke truly when he said, ‘Those who command the sea, command the trade of the world; those who command the trade of the world, command the riches of the world, and thus command the world itself.’ [Applause.]

“But the moments sweep by, and I must not detain you longer. There have been weary hours in all this incessant journeying, but they have been happy and golden hours too—happy, because full-freighted with hospitality and feasts to the eye and the mind; golden, because filled with recollections that will never die; friendships never to be forgotten till this heart ceases to beat; affectionate regards more priceless than the wealth of Ormuz and the Ind; and memories enshrined in the soul forever. [Applause.]

“Hoping I have a happy God speed from you all on the long journey before me, I must now say farewell,—no, not farewell, for that seems for life, and

“Farewell, farewell, is a lonely sound
That always brings a sigh;
But give me rather, when true friends part,
That good old word good-bye.”

And thus, to friends of other years, whom I have met here so happily again, and to the newer friends I have found in your midst, I bid you, one and all, not a life-long but a regretful good-bye.”

We have thus briefly gone over the chief events in the life of Speaker Colfax. Enough is given to show that not only in his political career, but in his large experience and statesmanlike views, he is eminently fitted for the high position to which he is nominated. The main traits of his character are clearly seen in this

biographical sketch. He is a man of irreproachable character, a firm advocate of all true social reforms, straightforward, frank in his conduct, fearless in the utterances of his principles and the discharge of his duty, of untiring energy and great skill and tact in whatever position he is placed. A more accomplished President of the Senate could not be found than he will make, while if by the death of the President he should be called to the Presidential chair, the country would be safe in his hands.

In personal appearance Colfax is not particularly commanding, for he is quite short, being only about five feet six inches high. Mr. Bowles, one of his fellow-travellers in the journey we have sketched, thus describes him: "He is young, say forty-two, has brownish hair and light-blue eyes, is a childless widower, drinks no intoxicating liquors, smokes *a la General Grant*, is tough as a knot, was bred a printer and editor, but gave up the business for political life, and is the idol of South Bend and all adjacencies. There are no rough points about him; kindness is the law of his nature; while he is never backward in differing from others, nor in sustaining his views by argument and votes, he is never harsh in utterance nor unkind in feeling, and he can have no enemies but those of politics, and most of these find it impossible to cherish any personal animosity to him. In tact he is unbounded, and with him it is a gift of nature, not a studied art; and this is perhaps one of the chief secrets of his success in life. His industry is equally exhaustless—he is always at work, reading, writing, talking, seeing, studying—I can't conceive of a single unprogressive, unimproved hour in all his life. He is not of a brilliant, command-

ing intellect—not a genius, as we ordinarily apply those words; but the absence of this is more than compensated by these other qualities I have mentioned—his great good sense, his quick intuitive perceptions of truth, and his inflexible adherence to it, his high personal integrity, and his long and valuable training in the service of the people and the Government. Without being, in the ordinary sense, one of the greatest of our public men, he is certainly one of the most useful, reliable, and valuable; and in any capacity, even the highest, he is sure to serve the country faithfully and well. * * *

Some people talk of him for President; Mr. Lincoln used to tell him he would be his successor, but his own ambition is tempered by the purpose to perform present duties well.”

GEN. GRANT'S LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE.

*To Gen. JOSEPH R. HAWLEY, President of the National Union
Republican Convention.*

In formally accepting the nomination of the National Union Republican Convention of the 21st of May inst., it seems proper that some statement of views beyond the mere acceptance of the nomination should be expressed. The proceedings of the Convention were marked with wisdom, moderation, and patriotism, and I believe express the feelings of the great mass of those who sustained the country through its recent trials. I indorse the resolutions. If elected to the office of President of the United States, it will be my endeavor to administer all the laws in good faith, with economy, and with the view of giving peace, quiet, and protection everywhere. In times like the present it is impossible, or at least eminently improper, to lay down a policy to be adhered to, right or wrong, through an administration of four years. New political issues, not foreseen, are constantly arising; the views of the public on old ones are constantly changing, and a purely administrative officer should always be left free to execute the will of the people. I always have respected that will, and always shall. Peace and universal prosperity—its sequence—with economy of administration will lighten the burden of taxation, while it constantly reduces the National debt. Let us have peace.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 29, 1863.

SPEAKER COLFAX'S LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE.

Hon. J. R. HAWLEY, President of the National Union Republican Convention.

DEAR SIR—The platform adopted by the patriotic Convention over which you presided, and the resolutions which so happily supplement it, so entirely agree with my views as to a just national policy, that my thanks are due to the Delegates as much for this clear and auspicious declaration of principles as for the nomination with which I have been honored, and which I gratefully accept. When a great Rebellion, which imperilled the national existence, was at last overthrown, the duty of all others, devolving on those intrusted with the responsibilities of legislation, evidently was to require that the revolted States should be readmitted to participation in the Government against which they had erred, only on such a basis as to increase and fortify, not to weaken or endanger, the strength and power of the nation. Certainly no one ought to have claimed that they should be readmitted under such rule that their organization as States could ever again be used, as at the opening of the war, to defy the national authority or to destroy the national unity. This principle has been the pole-star of those who have inflexibly insisted on the Congressional policy your Convention so cordially indorsed. Baffled by Executive opposition, and by persistent refusals to accept any plan of reconstruction proffered by Congress, justice and public safety at last combined to

teach us that only by an enlargement of suffrage in those States could the desired end be attained, and that it was even more safe to give the ballot to those who loved the Union than to those who had sought ineffectually to destroy it. The assured success of this legislation is being written on the adamant of history, and will be our triumphant vindication. More clearly, too, than ever before, does the nation now recognize that the greatest glory of a republic is that it throws the shield of its protection over the humblest and weakest of its people, and vindicates the rights of the poor and the powerless as faithfully as those of the rich and the powerful. I rejoice, too, in this connection, to find in your platform the frank and fearless avowal that naturalized citizens must be protected abroad at every hazard, as though they were native-born. Our whole people are foreigners, or descendants of foreigners; our fathers established by arms their right to be called a nation. It remains for us to establish the right to welcome to our shores all who are willing, by oaths of allegiance, to become American citizens. Perpetual allegiance, as claimed abroad, is only another name for perpetual bondage, and would make all slaves to the soil where first they saw the light. Our National cemeteries prove how faithfully these oaths of fidelity to their adopted land have been sealed in the life-blood of thousands upon thousands. Should we not, then, be faithless to the dead if we did not protect their living brethren in the full enjoyment of that nationality for which, side by side with the native-born, our soldiers of foreign birth laid down their lives? It was fitting, too, that the representatives of a party which had proved so true to national duty in time of war, should speak so clearly in time of peace for the maintenance untarnished of the

national honor, national credit, and good faith as regards its debt,—the cost of our national existence. I do not need to extend this reply by further comment on a platform which has elicited such hearty approval throughout the land. The debt of gratitude it acknowledges to the brave men who saved the Union from destruction, the frank approval of amnesty based on repentance and loyalty, the demand for the most thorough economy and honesty in the Government, the sympathy of the party of liberty with all throughout the world who longed for the liberty we here enjoy, and the recognition of the sublime principles of the Declaration of Independence, are worthy of the organization, on whose banners they are to be written in the coming contest. Its past record cannot be blotted out or forgotten. If there had been no Republican party, Slavery would to-day cast its baleful shadow over the republic. If there had been no Republican party, a free press and free speech would be as unknown from the Potomac to the Rio Grande as ten years ago. If the Republican party could have been stricken from existence when the banner of Rebellion was unfurled, and when the response of “No Coercion” was heard at the North, we would have had no nation to-day. But for the Republican party daring to risk the odium of tax and draft laws, our flag could not have been kept flying in the field until the long-hoped for victory came. Without a Republican party the Civil Rights bill—the guarantee of equality under the law to the humble and the defenceless, as well as to the strong—would not be to-day upon our National Statute-book. With such inspiration from the past, and following the example of the founders of the Republic, who called the victorious General of the Revolution to preside over the land his triumphs had saved from its ene-

mies, I cannot doubt that our labors will be crowned with success; and it will be a success that shall bring restored hope, confidence, prosperity, and progress South as well as North, West as well as East, and above all, the blessings under Providence of National concord and peace.

Very truly yours,

SCHUYLER COLFAX.

THE REPUBLICAN PLATFORM.

The National Republican Party of the United States, assembled in National Covention in the City of Chicago, on the 21st day of May, 1868, make the following Declaration of Principles :

I. We congratulate the country on the assured success of the Reconstruction Policy of Congress, as evinced by the adoption, in the majority of the States lately in rebellion, of Constitutions securing Equal Civil and Political Rights to all, and it is the duty of the Government to sustain those institutions and to prevent the people of such States from being remitted to a state of anarchy.

II. The guaranty by Congress of Equal Suffrage to all loyal men at the South was demanded by every consideration of public safety, of gratitude, and of justice, and must be maintained ; while the question of Suffrage in all the loyal States properly belongs to the people of those States.

III. We denounce all forms of Repudiation as a national crime ; and the national honor requires the payment of the

public indebtedness in the uttermost good faith to all creditors at home and abroad, not only according to the letter but the spirit of the laws under which it was contracted.

IV. It is due to the Labor of the Nation that taxation should be equalized, and reduced as rapidly as the national faith will permit.

V. The National Debt, contracted, as it has been, for the preservation of the Union for all time to come, should be extended over a fair period for redemption; and it is the duty of Congress to reduce the rate of interest thereon, whenever it can be honestly done.

VI. That the best policy to diminish our burden of debt is to so improve our credit that capitalists will seek to loan us money at lower rates of interest than we now pay, and must continue to pay so long as repudiation, partial or total, open or covert, is threatened or suspected.

VII. The Government of the United States should be administered with the strictest economy; and the corruptions which have been so shamefully nursed and fostered by Andrew Johnson call loudly for radical reform.

VIII. We profoundly deplore the untimely and tragic death of Abraham Lincoln, and regret the accession to the Presidency of Andrew Johnson, who has acted treacherously to the people who elected him, and the cause he was pledged to support; who has usurped high legislative and judicial functions; who has refused to execute the laws; who has used his high office

to induce other officers to ignore and violate the laws ; who has employed his executive powers to render insecure the property, the peace, liberty and life, of the citizen ; who has abused the pardoning power ; who has denounced the National Legislature as unconstitutional ; who has persistently and corruptly resisted, by every means in his power, every proper attempt at the reconstruction of the States lately in rebellion ; who has perverted the public patronage into an engine of wholesale corruption ; and who has been justly impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, and properly pronounced guilty thereof by the vote of thirty-five Senators.

IX. The doctrine of Great Britain and other European powers, that because a man is once a subject he is always so, must be resisted at every hazard by the United States, as a relic of feudal times, not authorized by the laws of nations, and at war with our national honor and independence. Naturalized citizens are entitled to protection in all their rights of citizenship, as though they were native-born ; and no citizen of the United States, native or naturalized, must be liable to arrest and imprisonment by any foreign power for acts done or words spoken in this country ; and, if so arrested and imprisoned, it is the duty of the Government to interfere in his behalf.

X. Of all who were faithful in the trials of the late war, there were none entitled to more especial honor than the brave soldiers and seamen who endured the hardships of campaign and cruise, and imperilled their lives in the service of the country ;

the bounties and pensions provided by the laws for these brave defenders of the nation are obligations never to be forgotten ; the widows and orphans of the gallant dead are the wards of the people—a sacred legacy bequeathed to the nation's protecting care.

XI. Foreign immigration, which in the past has added so much to the wealth, development and resources and increase of power to this republic, the asylum of the oppressed of all nations, should be fostered and encouraged by a liberal and just policy.

XII. This Convention declares itself in sympathy with all oppressed peoples struggling for their rights.

Unanimously added, on motion of Gen. Schurz :

Resolved, That we highly commend the spirit of magnanimity and forbearance with which men who have served in the Rebellion, but who now frankly and honestly coöperate with us in restoring the peace of the country and reconstructing the Southern State governments upon the basis of Impartial Justice and Equal Rights, are received back into the communion of the loyal people ; and we favor the removal of the disqualifications and restrictions imposed upon the late Rebels in the same measure as their spirit of loyalty will direct, and as may be consistent with the safety of the loyal people.

Resolved, That we recognize the great principles laid down in the immortal Declaration of Independence, as the true

foundation of democratic government ; and we hail with gladness every effort toward making these principles a living reality on every inch of American soil.

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